

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1. (Original) A method for managing orders in a multilateral environment comprising:
- receiving an order formed from an order template from the first system used by the first partner for ordering goods or services from a second partner;
  - determining if a first contract exists between the first partner and the second partner and if the first contract exists then:
    - parsing the order received into tag values representing predefined fields;
    - retrieving tag values for the contract, wherein the tag values contain terms that govern orders between the first partner and the second partner;
    - comparing the tag values for the order received against the tag values for the contract to determine compliance with the one or more contract terms and applying one or more rules for governing any discrepancies between the order and the first contract;
    - and
    - notifying at least one of the first system used by the first partner and a second system used by the second partner if the tag value for the order received does not comply with the tag values for the contract terms, and if the tag values for the order received does comply with the tag values for the contract, then placing the order with the second system used by the second partner.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into XML tag values representing predefined fields.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:
- sending a user interface for presentation of an order template including user selectable predefined fields on a first system used by a first partner;
4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, further comprising:
- prompting at least one of the first partner using the first system and the second partner using the second system for a set of rules to govern orders placed under the first contract.
5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

determining if the order placed for goods and services from the second partner contain any goods and services that are supplied by a third partner using a third system, and if any of the goods and services are provided by the third partner then:

comparing the tag values of the order received for goods and services supplied by the third party for compliance with a tag values for a second contract between the second partner and the third partner.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of comparing further comprises the sub-steps of:

retrieving one or more predefined rules between the second partner and the third partner; and

applying the rules retrieved for governing any discrepancies between the order and the second contract.

7. (Original) A business method for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

receiving an order from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

querying the database for predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners based on the order received;

recursively analyzing the predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners by examining one or more contractual tag values stored in the database for contracts between each of the trading partners in the hierarchical contractual relationship to determine if the tag values for the order comply with the one or more contractual tag values in the hierarchical contractual relationship for any goods and services to be supplied by any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship for the order.

8. (Original) The business method according to claim 7, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values.

9. (Original) The business method according to claim 7, wherein the step of recursively analyzing further comprises the sub-steps of:

retrieving one or more predefined rules from any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship for the order; and

applying the rules retrieved for governing any discrepancies between the order and the trading partner in the hierarchical contract relationships supplying goods and services for the order.

10. (Original) The business method according to claim 7, further comprising the step of:

placing the requested tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the requested tag values from the order received so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the requested tag values according to the predefined fields.

11. (Original) A business method for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an order;

receiving an order from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

placing the tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the tag values;

retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the tag values the order; and  
analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the tag values for the order and applying one or more rules for governing any discrepancies between the order and the contract tag values; and  
sending an order to each of the trading partners if tag values for the order complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

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12. (Original) The business method according to claim 11, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values

13. (Original) The business method according to claim 12, wherein in the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into predefined fields consisting of a price, a quantity, a delivery date and other business terms.

14. (Original) A business method for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an order receiving an order formed from an order template including user selectable predefined fields for ordering goods or services from a second partner;

receiving an order formed from the order template from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

placing the tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the tag values;

retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship

between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the tag values the order; and

analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the tag values for the order; and

sending an order to each of the trading partners if tag values for the order complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

15. (Original) The business method according to claim 14, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values

16. (Original) The business method according to claim 15, wherein in the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into predefined fields consisting of a price, a quantity, a delivery date and other business terms.

17. (Original) A computer readable medium containing programming instructions for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment, the programming instructions comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an order;

receiving an order from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

placing the tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the tag values;

retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the tag values the order; and

analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the tag values for the order; and

sending an order to each of the trading partners if tag values for the order complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

18. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 17, wherein the programming instruction of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values

19. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 18, wherein the programming instruction of parsing includes parsing the order received into predefined fields consisting of a price, a quantity, a delivery date and other business terms.

20 – 24 (Cancelled)

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